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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 23 SEPTEMBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you that violations of Iraq's airspace by United States and British aircraft based in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey have been continuing and that the aircraft in question have been engaging in acts of aggression, reconnaissance activities and acts of provocation. On 21 September 1999, 26 United States and British formations carried out 16 armed sorties from Kuwaiti airspace and 40 from Saudi airspace with support provided by an AWACS aircraft from inside Saudi airspace and an E-2C aircraft from inside Kuwaiti airspace. They overflew areas in Basrah, Dhi Qar, Muthanna, Najaf, Qadisiyah and Wasit governorates and attacked civilian and services-related installations. Our air defences engaged the aircraft and forced them to retire into Saudi and Kuwaiti airspace.

In one of the sorties flown on 21 September 1999, the aircraft fired missiles at civilian areas near the ancient city of Ur. A Swedish journalist, Jan Arell, a correspondent for Göteborgs-Posten, was injured as he was riding in a vehicle near the Ur archaeological site, which is 375 kilometres south of Baghdad. The Swedish journalist stated that he was driving his car at a point 2 kilometres from Ur when he was hit in the chest by fragments from an air-to-surface missile that landed 50 metres away. He dismissed outright the idea that there were any military bases or missile sites in the vicinity, thus exposing as false the worthless claims made by the United States and the United Kingdom that their attacks target sources of Iraqi anti-aircraft fire.

These cowardly attacks have the purpose of terrorizing the civilian population and causing serious damage to private and public property, and they constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Saeed H. HASAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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